

Summary Information Municipal Property Improvement Grant Programs Nationwide January/February 2004

Fairfax County: Richmond Highway Façade Improvement Program

- Purpose: To update and improve the appearance of existing commercial buildings on Richmond Highway by working with local building and business owners to upgrade the appearance of the area and to create a feeling of continuity within the targeted area.
- Goal: To enhance the appearance of both the Corridor and the individual property.
 - o Prevention and elimination of deteriorating conditions
 - o Providing an incentive for private participation in aesthetic enhancement of Corridor
 - o Retaining and expanding existing businesses resulting in the creation of new jobs
- Implementation: Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) receives and processes grant applications and makes requests for grants to the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCHRA) on behalf of property owners. FCHRA considers projects recommended for approval by SFDC and makes grant funds available. The applicant receives the grant as reimbursement upon successful completion of the project according to the approved plans. The grant can total no more than 50% of the project costs, and must be between \$5,000 and \$25,000.
- Approval criteria: Grant application reviewed by a Design Review Committee within SFDC for recommendation to FCHRA based on the following:
 - o Prevention/ replacement of deteriorating conditions
 - o Visual prominence
 - o Potential positive impact
 - o Aesthetic quality of proposal
 - o Adherence to design guidelines
 - o Comprehensiveness of project
- Qualifying improvements: Any of the below improvements within a targeted area of the Richmond Highway Corridor of Fairfax County.
 - o Repair, painting and residing of exterior walls
 - o Repair or replacement of exterior windows, doors, shutters, storefronts
 - o Installation, repair, replacement of exterior canopies and awnings
 - o Repair, replacement, or installation of new exterior lighting and commercial signage
 - o Installation of landscape improvements such as retaining walls, steps, and plantings
- Technical assistance: architects available for free design consultation through SFDC for conceptual plans and expansions no greater than 2,000 square feet or 33% of existing square footage, whichever is less

Bedford, VA: Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program

- matching grants of up to \$250.00
- evaluation criteria:
 - o visual prominence of the building and its location
 - o aesthetic quality and historic accuracy of the design proposal
 - o historical and architectural significance of the building
 - o potential impact on the attractiveness of the city streetscape, the particular building
 - o economic development of the designated project area
 - o comprehensive approach of the design, and the long-term maintenance plans

Orange, VA: Enterprise Zone Incentives- Façade Improvement Grants

www.townoforangeva.org/working/entzone-home.htm

Alexandria, VA: Mt Vernon Avenue Façade Improvement Grant Program

- Purpose: To provide an opportunity for business and commercial property owners to improve the appearance of buildings on or within 1,000 feet of Mt Vernon Avenue, to ensure Potomac West continues to be an attractive location for business, residents and customers.
- Implementation: Program administered by Alexandria Economic Development Partnership in collaboration with Alexandria's Planning and Zoning Department. Applications are due, reviewed, and approved or rejected within a one-month time frame in March and April. Applications are reviewed by a

committee of representatives from Potomac West Business Association, Arlandria Business Association, community and neighborhood associations, and a City Planning and Zoning employee. Approved applicants receive up to \$1,500 matching grant, or 10% of the total cost of improvement, whichever is less. Projects must be completed within one year and funds are dispersed as reimbursement following project completion. (Total available funds amounted to \$25,000 per year).

- Approval criteria:
 - o Proposed improvement is that of a quality which can be used as an example to other business owners
 - o Adheres to Mt Vernon Ave design guidelines
 - o Applications submitted from clusters of properties receive priority
 - o Improvements must have continuous and lasting value
- Qualifying improvements: The following general improvements are eligible for grants if within 1,000 feet of Mt Vernon Avenue:
 - o Physical improvements (i.e. painting, window replacement, lighting, signage, awning installation)
 - o Hardscape improvements (benches, bicycle racks, sidewalks)
 - o Removal of unsightly installations
 - o Purchase and installation of permanent landscape features

Manteca, California: Façade Improvement Program

- Purpose: To enhance the attractiveness and economic vitality of Manteca's commercial areas.
- Goals
 - o Assist removal of blighting influences in commercial areas
 - o Enhance attractiveness of commercial environment
 - o Encourage private investment in commercial areas
 - o Promote commercial vitality and increase economic activity
- Implementation: Property owner must submit application describing proposed improvements to the Manteca Redevelopment Agency, which is evaluated based on criteria delineated below. Owner and agency director sign agreement in which owner agrees to complete project within one year, maintain high construction standards, and maintain the improvements for five years. In return the Agency agrees to reimburse up to 67% of the project cost (not exceeding \$20,000) upon completion of the project.
- Approval criteria: the following are factors considered in evaluating every application for assistance:
 - o Removal of blighted conditions
 - o Support for prior or proposed public and/ or private investment
 - o Maintenance of historic character
 - o Enhancement of pedestrian environment
 - o Renovation of prominent locations
 - o Consistency with Downtown Improvement Plan
 - o Improvements which will lead to occupancy of existing vacant buildings
 - o Improvements facilitating retention and growth of existing business and expansion of economic activity
- Qualifying improvements: Any of the below improvements on all existing, legal, locally owned businesses within a Redevelopment Project Area within the City of Manteca.
 - o Sign, window, and door modification or replacement
 - o Landscaping
 - o Handicap accessibility modification
 - o Exterior lighting improvement
 - o Additional architectural features
 - o Awnings
 - o Any other improvements increasing the attractiveness of the building

Monticello, Illinois: Façade Improvement Matching Grants

- Purpose: To stimulate efforts to improve the street appearance of Monticello's commercial and business facades.

- Implementation: Monticello Main Street administers the program and offers design assistance, and the City of Monticello provides the funding. Applications are reviewed by a committee consisting of representatives from Community Development, City Services, Main Street and an architect, and are evaluated on the basis of the qualifications below. Grants are awarded to qualified applicants on a first come first serve basis and amount to \$3,000 each. Grants are limited to one per business per year and are awarded as reimbursement following completion of the improvement.
- Approval criteria:
 - o Property located within commercial or business zone
 - o Applicant must be building owner
 - o Monies must used for façade improvements such as, but not limited to, paint, window repair or replacement, masonry repair and appropriate signage, as approved by the committee

Arcata, CA Façade Improvement Grant Program

- Purpose: To encourage commercial property owners and business tenants to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings in an historically sensitive manner.
- Goal: To visibly enhance areas within the Arcata Main Street District in order to spur economic revitalization.
- Implementation: Program administered by the Arcata Community Development Agency (ACDA) in partnership with the Arcata Main Street Program. Property owners must agree to meet all conditions specified in the agreement for façade improvement grant with his or her application and all qualifying applicants are approved on a first come first serve basis. For exterior rehabilitation up to \$10,000, the program reimburses applicants for 100% of cost. Corner lots with significant façade exposure can qualify for an additional \$5,000.
- Qualifying improvements: Façade improvement grants are only allocated to businesses within the Main Street district. Examples of façade improvements include but are not limited to:
 - o Façade removal or renovation
 - o Sign renovation, replacement, painting
 - o Exterior wall repair and painting
 - o Door and window replacement or modification
 - o Awnings
- Technical assistance: architectural fees of up to 6% of the total façade grant are eligible for reimbursement

Allston, MA Façade Improvement Program

- Purpose: to improve the appearance of individual building facades, signs and awnings, as well as the overall look of the Allston Village Main Street District
- Goal: To leverage private improvements while making revitalization efforts affordable, creative and community based.
- Implementation: Program administered by the Design Committee of Allston Village Main Streets, comprised of business and property owners and residents of Allston Village. Applications are submitted to AVMS for approval and reimbursement matching grants of up to \$5,000 are awarded following completion of the improvement. Work for a matching grant must be completed within 6 months approval of the application.
- Qualifying improvements: Any of the following improvements undertaken in the AVMS district are eligible for funding:
 - o Signs
 - o Awnings
 - o Lighting
 - o Paint
 - o Removal/ replacement of exterior finishes or materials
 - o Recessing/ reconfiguring entrances
 - o Removal of extraneous elements
 - o Door/ window replacement or repair
 - o Grate and grate box removal or installation of electronic security systems to replace grates

Fayetteville, NC Façade Improvement Grant Program

- Purpose: to encourage downtown business property owners to reinvest in and improve the appearance of their building exteriors; to promote development that is physically, historically, and architecturally compatible with downtown buildings.
- Goals
 - o To promote the revitalization of façades of active, ongoing businesses through the rehabilitation of exteriors and landscapes.
 - o Removing blight, expanding the tax base, and increasing the economic vitality of the downtown Fayetteville area.
- Implementation: A committee of city representatives from Inspections, Community Development, Planning, Finance, and Administrative Services Departments will review completed applications. The city will authorize reimbursement payment after the confirmation of project completion in accordance with the approved plan. Fayetteville will provide a matching grant of up to \$2,500 for each façade renovated.
- Approval criteria: The design of the project should be sympathetic to the original integrity of the building, compatible with neighboring structures and of a quality that suggests the improvements will last a reasonable period of time. All work completed in historic district must be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.
- Qualifying improvements: Funds may be used for, but are not limited to:
 - o brick cleaning and repair
 - o painting
 - o window and/or door repair and replacement
 - o landscaping
 - o canopies, awnings, signage, lighting replacement or repair
 - o other permanent improvements to the property consistent with the architectural integrity of the building or space
 - o proceeds cannot be used for working capital, acquisition of property, equipment or inventory or to refinance private funding.

Emeryville, CA Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program

- Purpose: to assist with the physical revitalization of San Pablo and Park Avenues through a matching grant for facade improvements such as painting, signs, and awnings on commercial properties.
- Implementation: Program to be coordinated by the Emeryville Redevelopment Agency. Applications are subject to design review by the Redevelopment Agency and, if required, the Planning Department. Applicant will be required to execute a Façade Grant Program Contract prior to the commencement of façade improvement work. Reimbursement obtained after completion of improvement work. If the applicant uses a contractor, the amount of the reimbursement is 75% of the total costs of the façade improvement, including soft costs, up to a maximum grant amount of \$75,000. If the applicant performs the work himself or herself without a licensed contractor, the amount of the reimbursement is 100% of the cost of the materials, not to exceed a maximum dollar amount of \$75,000. The façade improvement must be of a high quality and be designed by a licensed architect.
- Qualifying improvements: All commercial facades along San Pablo and Park Avenues are eligible. Gun stores, massage parlors, liquor stores, pornography stores, cigarette stores, and video gaming businesses are ineligible for grants. Eligible types of improvements include painting, signage, doors, windows, awning, exterior lighting, parapet improvements, plastering, landscaping (capital improvements, not maintenance), professional fees (design, engineering, etc.), and City/County permit fees.

Provo, UT Façade Improvement Grant Program

- Implementation: In Phase I, a board representing the Downtown Business Alliance reviews applications. Any relevant recommendations for changes are made. DBA then issues an outright cash design grant of up to \$800 (or 50%, whichever is less) of the cost towards design services. In Phase II, reimbursement for improvement work up to \$800 (or 50%, whichever is less) is awarded after completion of improvements. Applicant has 180 days to complete rehabilitation or renovation of property.
- Evaluation criteria: Applications are evaluated based on the following

- Compatibility of proposed improvements with overall architectural design goals for the target area
- Relationship between proposed improvements and the general design character of the streetscape and surrounding area
- Overall impacts of the improvements upon the building
- Relationship between the improvements and the original architectural character of the building
- Recommendations of Design Review
- Eligible improvements: The following improvements upon buildings within the targeted area are eligible for improvements: brick restoration, window and/or door replacement, awnings, signage, restoration of original architectural features and other improvements visible from the street and have a positive appearance of the building. Additions to structures and roof repair are ineligible improvements.

Tualatin, OR Façade Improvement Grant Program

- Purpose: To create a program which provides a significant incentive for property owners and business lessees to restore or update their building facades; to increase assessed values of properties by improving the general appearance of the Central Design District.
- Implementation: All grant requests will be reviewed by the Economic Development Department and the Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (URAC), whereupon their recommendation will be submitted to the Tualatin Development Commission for approval/disapproval. Upon granting approval, the applicant will have one year to complete construction of the project in order to be compensated. 50/50 matching grants are paid to property owners upon completion of project up to \$5,000.
- Evaluation criteria: Funded projects must be visible from a public right of way and all projects must comply with Tualatin Code. Applications approved on a first come first serve basis.
- Eligible improvements: Grants are available for improvements undertaken in the city's Central District only. Qualifying improvements include but are not necessarily limited to exterior rehabilitation or restoration; siding repair or installation; installation, enlargement, or repair of windows; creating permanent outdoor dining and seating facilities (moveable furniture not included); screening for mechanical equipment; exterior painting (including murals); exterior facade cleaning; brick masonry or stucco repair; construction of permanent flower boxes; awnings and signage integral to the awning; pedestrian-oriented signage as determined in architectural review process; architect fees (must be an Oregon-licensed architect); Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements; other items as determined during the architectural review process.